Adventures topped simulations in 1989, says SPA

According to the Software Publishers Association report on recreational software (better known as "computer games"), adventure and role-playing games emerged as the largest category.

Adventurers bought 31.7% of all games sold in the USA last year. Simulations ran a close second, with 29.3%. The other categories: action/arcade with 21.9%, sports tackling 9.79%, and family entertainment, with 7.39.

Simulations were most popular overseas, capturing 40% of that market, with action/arcade games coming in at 36%. (There's no way to determine how the Iraq embargo will affect computer game sales, since the SPA didn't reveal sales figures for the Mideast or individual nations. However, we do hear that "Hitler simulators" are particularly popular in Iraq.)

In this great nation, Commodore remains the second most popular format for games, representing 19% of all sales. MSDOS is still the biggie, with 58%. Apple is number three, with 8.6% of the domestic market.

Elvira on disk

Accolade announced a deal with Horror Soft in Britain to publish *Elvira, Mistress of the Dark* here early next year. Starring that sultry horror show show, *Elvira* will be completely icon-driven, combine puzzle-solving with real-time hand-to-hand combat and feature over 800 locations. *Elvira* was a hit in England, according to *ZERO Magazine* (but Accolade's press release didn't mention what *Less than Zero Magazine* had to say about it). MSDOS, Amiga and ST versions are planned.

QuestBuster of the Year!

Paul Shaffer, who contributed the most walkthroughs for the upcoming *Quest for Clues III*, has attained the exalted status "QuestBuster of the Year" for 1990. He also verified quite a few other solutions. The book should be on the shelves by January.

EA and Sega

Electronic Arts' Software for Life policy has been extended to Sega., so anyone who owns an EA game that's converted for the Sega can downgrade to a Sega version for half-price.

New quests and conversions

It's late summer, and the adventure game market is drier than the desert outside the back door. All recent arrivals are reviewed in this issue, but *Dragonlord* was just imported by Cinemaware as part of its Spotlight line, with Amiga, ST and MSDOS due by now.

Where in Time is Carmen Sandiego? and *Dragons of Flame*, the action-arcade quest set in Krynn, arrived in August for C-64. We also got an Amiga *Fool's Errand*. Despite rumors published in another gaming magazine (what? there's another one?), Infocom has no plans to convert *Circuit's Edge* for the Amiga or anything else.

Later this year

Cinemaware may have a futuristic spy thriller for MSDOS. Infocom's only Christmas computer game will be *Battletech II*, designed and programmed by Westwood for MSDOS.

Videogames on the way out?

Latest reports from Japan indicate Nintendo is selling half as many games there as last year, with most sales going to the USA. Since Japan is about a year ahead of us in electronic entertainment, it looks like the videogame craze has peaked and the end is near.

Emily Littela strikes again

Recently we announced an upcoming EA conversion of the game *Helm of Shadow*. No such game exists. It's actually *Hound of Shadow* that was converted for ST and MSDOS.

In a related rumor, we hear the authors of *Hound of Shadow* are teaming with Accolade designers to do a joint sequel called *Les Manley: in Search for the Hound Dog of Shadow*.

Psychic editor?

Somebody get Time/Life Books on the phone! Precisely as the editor of *QB* predicted barely a month ago, this issue shipped about a week behind our normal schedule. Things should be back on track any minute now, so look for the October issue the first week of that month—a week or two sooner if you subscribe via "Adventure Express."

Renewal blues

If you renewed recently but it hasn't been reflected on the mailing label, it's probably because you changed from a third class to first class subscription a few months before your expiration date.

Until now we've been updating these renewals after mailing the final issue in the existing sub. Our data base sorts labels out by first class and third class, and if we updated them months ahead of time, the last few issues of your sub would be sent first class—when that shouldn't kick in till the first issue of the renewal (is this making *any* sense?). To avoid confusion (ha!), we'll now update the expiration date on all such renewals upon receipt, then change them from third to first class at the appropriate time. (Or just include an extra 50¢ for each issue left in your sub and start getting it first class right away.) **First class subscribers:** check your mailing label before tossing the envelope, since that's the only way to find out when your sub expires.

Instead of raising rates for first class subs to cover next year's postal rate hikes, we're considering doing away with the envelopes and keeping the price at $24. Let us know what you think...

And finally, special thanks and a tip of the *QB* helm to James Hamm for his recent five-year renewal.

Cinemagraphics from Sierra

When the Sierra JetCopter buzzed the house a few times before landing amid the cacti out back, I realized Kirk "Mad Dog" Greene was at the controls. I hadn't seen him since the fall of Saigon, where he'd earned his nickname in a...well, that's a story best saved for *Soldier of Fortune*, or maybe *The Best of Stag*. After obligingly helping me replace the shingles blown off the roof by the chopper, he helped me nail down exactly what Sierra has in store for quest-ioning minds like yours and mine this autumn.

Working versions of every game in Sierra's fall line-up were conveniently stored on a CD-ROM unit, which Mad Dog guarded like the boxes of CIA files he'd tossed into the army helicopter on the last flight from the US Embassy back in Saigon. He booted up the portable clone, clobbered it a few times to make it recognize the CD-ROM drive, and proceeded with the show.

A tumbler of Waterfill and Frazier in hand, I leaned back, expecting to see basically more of the same animated adventures Sierra's been doing for years. Sure, I knew they were introducing 256-color support for VGA, but was unprepared for such radical changes in the graphics.

I got my first glimpse in a pair of adventures from Dynamix. (After licensing Dynamix technology last year, Sierra president Ken Williams liked it so much he bought the company—watch your sets for the upcoming TV spot.)

The Dynamix Duo

Rise of the Dragon and *Heart of China* lie worlds apart from traditional Sierra adventures: there's no parser, and you see digitized paintings instead of computer art. The pictures look more surrealistic than cartoony, bringing to mind *Heavy Metal* comics and the movie *Brazil*.

The interface is reminiscent of ICOM Simulations' *Deja Vu II*. With the mouse, you grab objects in the picture and slide them into your inventory, give them to other people, and so on. Smooth, rippling spot animation and other special effects involving lights and shadow add to the sense of "being there."

In *Rise of the Dragon*, you'll fight a futuristic war on drugs to eradicate a mindbender that turns its users into mutants (which we've all seen happen to the occasional computer user as well). After a long night at the Pleasure Dome, my character returned home and used a push-button remote control to check the messages on his Vid-Phone.

Startlingly realistic pictures of the caller appeared on the Vid-Phone screen (NBC anchor Morton Dean starred in the demo, but won't wind up in the final release). Instead of relying on computer art

and animation, Dynamix videotaped real actors, then digitized the tapes and spliced them into the game. You'll see lots of them, too ("probably a plethora," according to Greene) during your quest to solve a murder and do in the druggies.

Similar videotaped scenes bring *Heart of China* to life as you sleaze your way through Hong Kong and Europe to rescue

I yam what I Graham.

the kidnapped daughter of a wealthy American investor. In *China* you play Jake Masters and travel from Kathmandu to Paris in the 1930s. Unlike *Dragon*, this one lets you switch between what are called "meanwhile" viewpoints of the three major characters.

An onscreen map shows the different places you can visit around the landscapes in each of the Dynamix games (somewhat as in the *Manhunter* series, though this map looks more like a poster). Puzzles hinge on object manipulation, and you interact with people by choosing options from windows that materialize at various places on the screen rather than being pulled down from a menu bar. The digitized paintings and subtle animation take advantage of 256 colors in VGA, and major sound boards are supported.

Want to be another hero?

Are the authors of this sequel psychic? Just about the time Iraq invades Kuwait, they're putting the finishing touches on a game set in the burning sands of the Arabian desert, where the forces of an evil city are attacking the good city. Your goal in this Arabian Nights-type tale is to resolve the conflict. Gameplay is similar to *Hero's Quest*. You can import your hero from that game, or create a new one.

The odd thing about this sequel is that Sierra chose to call the series *Do You Want to be a Hero?* rather than *Hero's Quest*. So the actual title will be probably be *Do You Want to be a Hero II: Trial by Fire*. It still uses the SCI adventure sys-

By Shay Addams

Letters to the Editor
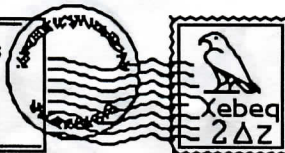
Dear QuestBusters:
I dare you to read this letter. First, I never played a computer game before *Ultima V*, but figured it out in three months with no help. Then I finished *Ultima VI* in four weeks. So I fail to see the value of your providing clues in *QB*. And why should I order *Quest for Clues* for full retail price and pay shipping charges, when I can get it from ORIGIN without shipping charges? Since I get a coupon in the books for three free issues, why should I send in money for a subscription? Get realistic. I know this letter will be read by a secretary and tossed in the trash without ever reaching the Big Boss' Desk, but that's the way the cookie crumbles, right? So there!
Armando Rodriquez

Letters beginning "I dare you to..." are the funniest mail we get, so we always read them first. Everyone else isn't quite the Master Adventurer you are—most people say they find the clues very useful. ORIGIN *publishes* the books, so they can afford to pick up the shipping. And you can *always* find games cheaper at Babbages, etc., since they get volume discounts when ordering from distributors. But we do extend your sub and give you mapping paper, so it evens out. And by buying from *QB*, you're helping support an outfit that delivers the world's most objective reviews and tons of clues (we don't sell ads to computer games companies and are entirely subscriber-supported, like public radio). About the coupons: when you send $$ with one, you get the three free issues for a total of 15, plus you get $5 worth of back issues.

QuestBusters™
The Adventurers' Journal

MegaTraveller 1: Best Quest of the Month

One of the Cardinal Rules of Reviewing Computer Games is to avoid words like great, superb and fantastic. From time to time, however, along comes a game that truly warrants this level of praise, and *MegaTraveller 1: The Zhodani Conspiracy* is indeed one of them.

In a futuristic setting, your job is to thwart an invasion by the Zhodani, a race attempting to overthrow the Third Imperium and seize control of the Spinward Marches, culminating a 500-year long aggression. The story commences in a bar (naturally) on the planet Efate.

Your compatriots are lounging around when a woman approaches and begs you for help. She explains that her friends hold vital information about the current aggression by the Zhodani and hires you and your crew to take a holographic disk to their agent on Boughene, who will pay you for the job.

Suddenly thugs burst in, agents of Konrad Keifer, the Regina subsect chief executive of the Shaurshid Megacorporation, who has been smuggling supplies for the Zhodani. Lenara passes you the disk, encoding key and half of an Imperial seal, then whips out a laser pistol and holds the thugs at bay while you make your escape. These events unfold in an introductory series of pictures and text.

Your first tasks are to escape the area and amass enough credits to equip the ship with a star drive powerful enough to make the jump to Boughene. Your party may need to resort to piracy in order to get enough credits in time to complete your mission.

Type: Role-playing
System: Amiga, ST, MSDOS 512K required, mouse/joystick optional; CGA, EGA, VGA, Tandy 16-color; Covox Sound Master)
Version reviewed: MSDOS

From Pencil and Paper to Disk

The *Traveller* game system was introduced by Game Designers Workshop as a paper and pencil RPG in 1977. It consisted of a three-book set of basic rules and thirteen supplements, and various scenarios soon followed. Ten years later, GDW revised it into *MegaTraveller*. The premise of the game, as well as the computer version, is that a group of ex-military adventurers have banded together to seek their fortunes on the frontier of space.

Character creation routines are just like the tables found in the original game, except that there is only one race to choose: human. Players get a choice of six statistics, ranging from Strength to Social Standing, which are expressed in hexadecimal notation ranging from 1 to 15 (F). From there, you may submit to the draft, or attempt to enlist directly into the service of your choice.

Each service has its advantages. The Army and Marines can handle ground-based weapons, while the Scouts, Navy and Merchants are better equipped in abilities relating to space travel. The wise player will create a party with a mix of the different services.

After entering the service, you will acquire skills based on the type of duty to which you are assigned. Then you can reenlist or muster out.

This cycle continues until you muster out or are forced to leave. A character who attains more than one term of service is eligible to receive equipment and/or Credits as he leaves the service (character creation) for civilian life (the game).

The equipment you muster out with, however, is insufficient to last you through the game, or even through the first battle. (Avoid all planetary combat, which occurs in real-time, until you've upgraded your equipment and bought more grenades.)

There are over 70 talents and skills. The skills chosen during the initial character generation phase are important, as they determine the chance of success or failure of a given action. So it's important to have characters that rarely duplicate skills other than the most basic ones, such as Vacc Suit, Handgun and the like. It also helps to have at least two characters with Turret Weapons skill, in order to more effectively use both the weapons aboard your ship, the ISS Interloper.

With repetitive use, the characters' skills will improve. If, for example, you frequently engage and defeat other spacecraft, your associated skills (Turret Weapon, Ship Tactics, etc.) can be increased for a steep fee the next time you visit a full-service Starport.

Movement and combat take place on an aerial-view display. A menu in the bottom corner lets you shift between menus for Party, Game, Vehicle and others.

Party members may move individually or as a group. Movement is in eight direc-

MegaMSDOS Version

tions. It's confusing at first. As expected, you hit the right arrow to turn right. But instead of punching the up arrow to proceed in that direction, as you do in most games, you have to keep pressing the right arrow. After a few minutes of practice, however, you'll find this a very natural way of moving your characters.

When you enter your ship, the view switches to a starfield. The ship, a little triangle, takes off when you've run the proper programs, then you use the mouse or arrow keys to turn, accelerate and so on across a scrolling sky of stars. If your ship has Jump capability, you can select a destination from a hexagonal map where the destinations are labeled right on the hexes.

Space flight is quickly mastered and lots of fun. You can view individual controls for each crewmember, and colored bar graphs simplify reading the displays. In most menus throughout the game, you can activate an option by hitting the key corresponding to the first letter of its name.

It's a good idea to save frequently, especially every time you land on a different planet. Maybe that's whey the designers allow you to save up to 30 positions.

There are the usual locked door puzzles, objects to find and use, and some interaction with NPCs via the "Converse" command, which elicits brief dialogue from people who often tell you want they will buy. Much of your time will be spent finding such items and selling them.

Developing your characters and equipping them is the focus of the *MegaTraveller* experience, however. Various computer programs are necessary to fly the ship: Jump, Maneuver and the like. Represented by little icons, they must be loaded into the ship's computer before you can "run" them and do things.

Triggered by clicking on a character's icon at any time during the game, the perceptive presentation of character stats consists of color-coded screens whose abundant options are easily selected via mouse or keystrokes. You can view stats and skills, use or move objects (depicted with little pictures of weapons), view personal records, etc. Role-players who enjoy detailed emphasis on the characters and their capabilities and development will really like this game system.

One problem I had with the original release was mainly hardware-related. The
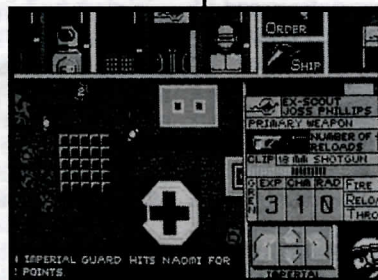
By Bruce E. Wiley

MegaTraveller 1

combat phase tends to be rather frustrating, as it seems that my opponents would get off about seven or eight shots to my one. Most of this was due to the processor speed of my Tandy EX.

Also, the manual states that to navigate between planets, you must follow the circles representing the planets' orbit. Unfortunately, the programmers ran out of memory when writing all the routines and omitted that routine, then forgot revise the documentation to reflect the change. Most of the problems were ironed out in later versions (the latest is 2.0).

The Life of a Pirate

In order to successfully make money as a pirate, you will need at least one crewman with Turret Weapon-1 skill or better, a Pilot and a Comm officer with Communications-1 or better and Sensor Ops-1 or higher.

All skills are referred to by the <name of skill>-<skill level> format: a character who can figure out which end of the Autopistol to point at the target would have a skill of Handgun-1. While it isn't necessary to have a skill in a weapon or task in order to actually accomplish firing the weapon or doing that task, the chance of success is greatly reduced if there is no skill in the appropriate category.

Sensor Ops is important because you want to clearly identify potential targets. After all, it's easier to shoot up a Pirate Interplanetary craft with 300 structure points than an Imperial Destroyer with 2,000 points. As a result of your activities, however, Imperial Navy ships will soon start escorting smaller ships. (No one said that a Pirate's life was easy.)

Digitized sound effects are piped through the PC speaker and sound pretty good. You can also use a Covox Sound Master and hear even better sounds. With more than 512K, sound effects are loaded into RAM to speed up the game.

In general, the feel of the game is very good and the attention to detail makes it exceptional. The top-down graphics are as sharp as those in *Wasteland*, even in CGA or Tandy 16-color mode. In fact, when you're on-planet, the graphics are clear enough to eliminate the need for mapping. The combination of keyboard and/or mouse interfaces make operating the game easy and enjoyable, except for land combat. [Editor: the VGA graphics, however, don't look noticeably better than EGA.] A science-fiction game is hard enough to develop as it is—*MegaTraveller* not only accomplishes that, but also does it well.
Conclusions: More than just "Best Quest of the Month," *MegaTraveller* is one of the finest science fiction role-playing computer games in at least the

Sierra's Fall Line-up

tem, with the graphics style, combat and puzzles of the original *Hero's Quest*.

The Sequel Police

Amazing changes await *Space Quest* fans, for the sequel replaces the cartoon-style graphics of the SCI system with "cinemagraphics," in which airbrush-style paintings of the settings—every tree, building and person—are realistically textured and shaped to lend an even greater 3-D sensation than before. No longer does the program abruptly display a new scene when you enter an adjacent location, for the screen now scrolls smoothly, "panning" across the picture as you move into the next area.

The plot this time: Roger Wilco wants to return to his home planet, Xenon, which entails rescuing the Latex Babes of Estros (and naturally, they just *have* to go to The Mall right away). But you keep getting killed by the Sequel Police, who are after you because something you do in *Space Quest IV* affects events in *Space Quest XII*—so the plot not only lampoons time travel stories, but the whole concept of sequels as well.

This may be the final *Space Quest*, and the plot certainly makes it the sequel to end all sequels. Just think of it as nine *Space Quests* in one, since it spans the events in *IV* through *XII*. It will set another first for Sierra, which will release it in four different MSDOS formats: EGA high-density, EGA low-density, VGA-only and CD-ROM (spring).

"Walking Tall" in Daventry

Bringing back King Graham for a reprise, Roberta Williams' *King's Quest IV* is also illustrated in Sierra's new "cinemagraphics" style and will be available in the same formats as *Space Quest IV*. In addition to incorporating 256 colors and digitized art, it has animation that enhances such atmospheric effects as the mist rolling in and out and slowly

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last three or four years. Though its level of complexity is better suited for the advanced adventurer, the simplicity of its interface and streamlined (yet detailed) character generation routines make this game enjoyable and playable. It also scores high marks for graphics, digitized sound and clarity of documentation. In all, the *MegaTraveller* computer game system holds true to the original RPG system, making for a truly great game—with a sequel due in October.

Skill Level: Advanced
Protection: Keyword from manual
Price: $59.95
Company: Paragon/Microprose

blanketing the forest.

And Roberta did away with the parser entirely. First you click on one of the row of icons at the top of the screen. When you move the cursor into the picture, it changes to that icon's name: "eye," for example. You can then examine an object by clicking on it with that icon.

King Graham's quest is to rescue his kidnapped family, and this time he won't get tripped up over landscape elements if controlled with a mouse. You can click on a destination, and Graham meanders over without getting stuck on a gigantic Venusian fly trap or a gnarled and twisted oak tree. (This applies to Roger Wilco too.) In the CD-ROM version, you can hit the "mouth" icon and hear dialogue recorded by real actors.

King's Quest I: the SCI upgrade

All the older Sierra quests are being rewritten with the SCI system. *King's Quest I* now looks like a whole new game, thanks to new graphics, intricately scored music and a full range of sound effects. *Mixed-up Mother Goose*, *Larry I*, *Space Quest I* and *II*, *Police Quest I* will also be converted to the SCI standard for MSDOS and Amiga. You'll be able to swap your old versions for the new ones for a minimal charge.

The only CD-ROM game demoed was *Mixed-up Mother Goose*. It was a lot more fun to hear real human voices instead of digitized dialogue, and I was so overwhelmed by the graphics, animation, voices and special effects, I actually wanted to play this kindergartners' game. We'll have more on this and other CD-ROM quests in an upcoming feature.
Conclusions: Sierra's new "cinemagraphics," featuring animated paintings that fill the screen in Disneyesque fashion, transcend the realm of computer graphics—they go way past "state of the art" and verge on "the state of art." It's not often I'm actually impressed by a computer game, but it's already happened twice this year: once with *Ultima VI*, now with Sierra's new graphics style. It's encouraging to see a few companies still making advances in computer games, since it means *everyone* won't go down the tubes when the videogame craze fades into oblivion.

Projected Release Dates

MSDOS: *Rise of the Dragon* in October; *Heart of China* in November (no conversions have been announced for these, but Amiga versions are anticipated); *Space Quest IV*, *King's Quest V*, *Trial by Fire*, and *Mixed-up Mother Goose* (SCI) will be out between October and Christmas. Amiga, Mac and ST versions of *Trial by Fire*, *Space Quest IV* and *King's Quest V* are planned, but no release dates have been announced (CD-ROM versions of the last two are set for spring)

QuestMakers: *The Magic Candle's* Ali N. Atabek

QB: What was the first computer role-playing game you played?

Atabek: *Ultima II*, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Of all the games I've played, that one had the most influence on me. The idea to write my own games occurred after finishing *Ultima III*, because I looked for more games to play but was disappointed in what I found. I had to find a way to spend my evenings, so I started working on *Rings of Zilfin* on an Apple II (that I still have). I scratched it halfway through and started over. It was a learning experience. I was already programming on mainframes, doing financial work for a major corporation in Los Angeles. So I knew programming—it was game programming I had to teach myself. *Zilfin* took two years.

QB: Had you played pencil and paper role-playing games?

Atabek: Never. But my partner Jim Thomas has a lot of experience in that and helps with that aspect in the design.

QB: How did *Magic Candle* happen?

Atabek: By the later stages of *Zilfin* I knew what I wanted to do, but it was too late to do any of it in that game. So I started on *Magic Candle* as soon as I finished *Zilfin*. Again, I had a day-time job, and my tools were pretty simple. I didn't have any fancy cross-assemblers or anything like that. It took three years, but two of those were part-time, working at nights. The last year we formed Mindcraft and went at it full-time.

QB: Where did the land of Deruvia and the story of the candle come from?

Atabek: We made it up! I guess I get influenced by all the fantasy novels I read. Tolkien, of course, got me started, and I read most everything that comes out. Saberhagen is one of my favorites, and Dennis Ettings.

QB: Will *Candle II* follow up on the original story and setting?

Atabek: Yes. We got a very good response from people about the story in the first one and knew we had to top that, so we even brought in outside people to help with the story and characters, and we have some very nice surprises in there. We still have candles, but now we have evil candles. In *MC I*, it was a good candle, white in color, and the demon was trapped within its flame. As long as it burned, the demon couldn't escape. In *MC II* it's reversed. Four of the Eldens who disappeared in the first game are trapped in the flames of evil candles and will die if you don't rescue them in time. But this is just part of a bigger story that envelopes this part of the quest.

QB: How does the sequel differ?

Atabek: There's much more freedom in *MC II* than *MC I in* terms of what the player can and cannot do. And there's also a lot more story. I'm quite pleased with the way we managed to combine the story and the game, because the danger with overemphasizing the story is that you start taking away the player's freedom: to make sure he experiences the story, you start forcing a linear structure so things happen in sequence and a story emerges. And we want to avoid that, we want to give the player the feeling that he or she is sort of controlling his or her own destiny. On the other hand, if you give them total freedom, how do you ensure the story develops the way you want it to? That's the big design challenge, and I think we're handling it rather skillfully.

The interface has been totally reworked, and the game moves along much more briskly now. In *MC I* we displayed the player's available commands and the games text in the same window. So when text was displayed, the commands would disappear. Now text has its own dedicated window, so the game moves much more quickly. We're supporting the mouse on the PC, and we've refined and retuned all the interface functions so you can play more intuitively.

QB: What other innovations can we look forward to seeing?

Atabek: It has many, many new features. Three new spell books with excellent spells that are a lot of fun, some that add enormous depth, tactical depth to combat. And combat moves much faster now. We've done away with the set-up phase, so you no longer have to move people into position and equip their weapons at the beginning of combat. They have default positions, which you can change, and can walk around with weapons equipped, which was not possible in *MC I*. You can also turn combat over to one of your companions, such as a Dwarf, who'll take over and issue commands in your place. It's more than just an auto-mode, because the way combat will be conducted depends on which character you choose to be the leader. Dwarves hate Orcs, for example, so if you're facing a party of Orcs and put a Dwarf in charge, he'll have the party attack the Orcs till they're wiped out, which can be a foolish move—there could be a Magic user throwing Fireballs at you, but the Dwarf doesn't care.

In fact, we've developed all kinds of characters for every race and monster. Various criteria on how they fight, like monsters who get very angry when you attack their leader, so they react by targeting anyone who does so. And we have new attributes that haven't been seen that much in role-playing. And people will even talk to you without being approached. In certain situations and places they'll make comments and so on, and they have much more personality than in the first game.

QB: How about monsters?

Atabek: We still use some of the classic monsters, such as Orcs and Goblins, because they're such a fundamental part of the fantasy setting that people would be disappointed if we didn't. But we also like to come up with monsters that are unique in some way, that are completely our creation, monsters you won't find in any *A D & D* monster manual. And we brought in professional artists this time.

QB: Which computer will it be out on first?

Atabek: The IBM, but Apple and Commodore versions will follow. The Apple version will have double-high resolution graphics, so you'll need 128K. It's coming along nicely but is way behind schedule, and I'm starting to doubt it will be out for Christmas. We're still working very hard, however, to make it.

QB: Has Mindcraft got any other new games lined up?

Atabek: We're picking up the Omnitrend titles. They'll develop the games, and we'll publish them. *Breach II* will repackaged as our first one. We've got a fantasy war game for late next year. Shortly we'll be starting on *The Frozen Jungle*, a science fiction role-playing game that will utilize many of the pieces we've developed for *Magic Candle*.

QB: Anything else you want to say before returning to the dungeons?

Atabek: Just "Hi mom!" She's been very supportive. And that I'm very excited about *Magic Candle II*. We're establishing a very powerful gaming system to play with, but it has so much depth we'll be able to use this as an engine in other games. We're already making plans for *Magic Candle III*.

Secret of the Silver Blades

This is SSI's fourth "gold box game," their line of "Fantasy Role-Playing Epic"'s using TSR's *A D & D* system. Set in the Forgotten Realms fantasy world, *Silver Blades* concentrates on strategy and tactics for a small band of up to six characters and up to two NPCs.

The tactical combat was refined into a fairly efficient system, and the magic system's faithfulness to *A D & D* rules is one of this series' big pluses. And actual puzzles—mainly riddles and object-oriented situations—were incorporated, making this one more than just another combat-intensive quest.

One very enjoyable part of this game is that it allows for advancement not provided for in many *A D & D* pencil and paper games. Thieves can advance to a maximum level of 18. Classes can reach 15. Many gamers object to limitations on the levels to which characters can advance, because these limitations are too restrictive to game-play. Limitations in level for *A D & D* games is explained by the limitations designed into the scenario itself. A planned scenario will deal with even higher levels of play, and this game is designed for high-level play.

The story begins sometime after the events in *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, which was a sequel to *Pool of Radiance*.

Type: Combat-oriented role-playing
Systems: C-64 (joystick optional), IBM (512K required, hard disk recommended, mouse optional; 640K for Tandy graphics or mouse; Roland, Ad Lib, CMS)
Planned conversions: none

The game lets you transfer characters from *Pool* to *Bonds*, and from *Pool* or *Bonds* to *Blades*.

Many people have had trouble with the character transfer routine. So did I. Perhaps my inability to transfer characters was due to my own stupidity.

The game attempted to access the characters, but the characters never showed up in the group. I got around this deficiency using the training menu's "modify character" option, which lets you change the character statistics, Hit Points and character name to generate custom characters.

Alternatively, you can use the pre-rolled characters provided with the game, or roll your own by choosing from a list of six races: Dwarves, Elves, Half-Elves, Gnomes, Halflings and Humans.

There are six randomly generated ability scores: Strength, Intelligence, Wisdom, Dexterity, Constitution, Charisma and Hit Points. Rolled characters are given 200,000 experience points and the levels are determined as per *A D & D* rules relating to class and experience.

Depending upon your random attribute scores and race, you can pick from six character classes: Clerics, Fighters, Rangers, Paladins, Magic-users and Thieves. Non-humans can be multi-class characters with up to three professions to divide experience and hit point advancement among. Multi-class characters are limited in advancement by race, Strength and Intelligence (except for Thieves, who have no limitations). For example, a Half-Elf cannot advance beyond Cleric level 5 but can advance up to Thief level 18.

EGA   MSDOS

More three-way splits

Multi-class characters also split experience points three ways, so that 200,000 experience on a three-class character is 66,666 per class. I suggest that the only multi-class character you use in this game be a Dwarf Fighter/Thief, who can wield Fighter weapons and advance up to 9th level Fighter and 18th level Thief.

Human characters can be dual-class characters who are one class for the first part of their lives, then change to a new one. Once his level in the new class exceeds his level in his old class, he can use both classes and will gain Hit Points normally. A dual-class Human Fighter turned Thief could be a greater asset than the Dwarf multi-class Fighter/Thief. (These race limitations have aggravated some players to the point of editing their character files to allow for the higher levels for non-Human characters.)

Northwest of Moonsea

The adventure kicks off in the town of New Verdigris in the Dragonspine Mountains, which are just northwest of Moonsea and the ruins of Phlan, the setting for *Pool*, and northeast of Tilverton, the setting for *Bonds*. They've been teleported there by the mayor of New Verdigris.

Three hundred years ago Verdigris was a thriving mining town and home to the Well of Knowledge. The mines produced the highest quality and quantity of gem stones in all the realms. About that time at the nearby Castle of the Twins, a battle erupted between two brothers: Oswulf, a Paladin, and Eldamar, a Mage who, with the help of the evil god Bane, was reborn as an evil Lich called the Dreadlord.

Oswulf led a small force of high-level adventurers called the Silver Blades against the Dreadlord and his Black Circle followers. Rather than slay his brother, Oswulf had his Mages and Clerics cast a spell to freeze the valley permanently.

Oswulf fell while protecting the Silver Blades from the Black Circle's final counterattack. The New Verdigris officials ask the party to help clear the mines of the evil creatures that are being released by the Black Circle, and unravel the 300-year old Cold spell holding the glacier over the Castle of the Twins and the valley floor.

Three coins in a fountain

You will be assisted in this goal by the Well of Knowledge, which imparts information and occasionally grants wishes in return for payment in gems. Your first mission is to free the Well from its captors so it can help direct your quest.

Due to an amusing error in the mayor's wish at the Well of Knowledge, the adventurers arrive nude and are given magical weapons, gems, jewels and platinum as payment for their work. You must outfit your group with armor and weapons, since the weapons given by the town treasury leave its members nearly as naked as when they arrived in the town.

The magic system is straight out of the *A D & D* rulebooks. Spells are limited to only a dozen or so types per level. The Forgotten Realms game setting lacks the complex magic system of the Dragonlance setting used in *Champions of Krynn*. Many players differ in their preferences of the two magic systems. I am prejudiced—I like *both* systems.

Due to the higher levels for characters in *Blades* over *Bonds* new spells were added: 7th and 6th level spells for Clerics and Magic-users, and 2nd level Druid spells for high-level Rangers. In addition, the higher levels add to certain spells that use level as a multiplier of power, such as Fireball and Magic Missile.

By Al Giovetti

No wilderness travel this time

Graphics are much the same as in *Pool* and the other "gold box" games. But this time there's no wilderness travel, for the area in and around New Verdigris is very large. The action takes place in the town, the ruins, the Well of Knowledge, the Old Administration Building, the temple, a 10-level mine shaft and 10-level castle dungeon, miles of "ice rifts" complete with a Storm Giant city, and the three levels of the castle itself.

While you're exploring, the left side of the screen shows a first-person view of your surroundings. As you walk down the dungeon corridors, the walls that scroll past are of many colorful and varied media, lending atmosphere to the chase.

Monsters and other NPCs grow larger as they approach, until they fill the dungeon window with their two-frame animated visage. The graphics for some of the monsters differs from those in earlier games, and in some cases they did not change for the better.

Special characters and situations result in the whole top half of the screen being devoted to a computer art display that, unfortunately, is not animated. One of these displays shows the evil Dreadlord himself in the top level of the castle.

Graphics are EGA, but they do look better on my VGA monitor than on the EGA monitor in 16-color mode. VGA in 256-color mode is not supported. CGA and Hercules are supported, but with less visual beauty.

Improved auto-mapping

One of the main objections to past games in this series has been their limited auto-mapping, for the auto-mapping feature was disabled in many of the dungeon and wilderness areas, which made it virtually useless there. Several areas of this game can be auto-mapped after your group completes a few battles to "clear" a small local territory of hostile monsters. These auto-mappable areas include the town, the administration building, the Well of Knowledge, the dungeon, the Storm Giant village, and the castle. Auto-mapping doesn't appear to work in the ruins and the ice rifts.

Since many more areas now use auto-mapping, one of the main objections to this game system appears to have been alleviated. If the game designers could figure a way to use auto-mapping throughout the game, including the ruins and the ice rifts, the problem would be completely eliminated.

Combat

The left side of the combat screen is devoted to a semi-three dimensional "oblique angle" perspective of the battle. The characters can move in any of eight directions by using the keyboard numerical keypad, mouse or joystick. Combat is resolved on a turn basis, depending on the combatants' relative dexterity. A delayed turn phase accommodates the time it takes to cast spells, or allows you to time your movement and attack.

Combat can be handled manually or in auto mode. Some battles can be fought successfully in auto mode from beginning to end, while others require manual control of the back rank's ranged weapons, such as Archers and spellcasters.

Where Clerics or powerful wizards are in the back ranks of the enemy, you hit the space bar to disable auto mode and use ranged weapons to keep these powerful characters from casting spells such as Hold Person and Death Strike.

Auto mode sacrifices common sense strategy and also results in movement that is less than advantageous in many situations, where the characters run behind a wall, run away from the enemy, move erratically from side to side rather than taking a direct route to the enemy. Perhaps the game designers should make the auto mode movement a little more intelligent.

Another auto mode improvement that could be made concerns ranged weapons. With all the group on automatic non-magical play (Alt-A), characters with Bows who can't get to an enemy character should be able to use the Bow until they can get to an enemy with a hand weapon.

As in *Krynn*, combat has been streamlined. The action is quicker, and you will not wage any five-hour battles, like those in *Pool*. Many battles are over in less than five minutes. The flight of arrows is abbreviated, with a few refinements the combat system could be a real joy.

Everybody must get stoned

There are a lot of high-level monsters, including an abundance of Basilisks and Medusae. Your characters are constantly getting stoned by them. Clerics have a defense against this in the spell Stone to Flesh, but it may not be as effective as silver shields, which reflect the gaze of Medusae and Basilisks. (See *Keys* for related tips.)

Like *Krynn*, this game has mouse support. I prefer keyboard control of characters over mouse control, since I don't want arthritis in the first two fingers of my right hand. I like to use *all* my fingers. But those who enjoy mice say the interface speeds up the game and makes operations less tedious.

Joystick is also supported for move-

ment and may even be superior to the mouse for some players. In a few situations, like flying a dragon, mouse control excels over the keyboard. I do not find the joystick particularly superior to the keyboard for this game, but did give it a try.

Several sound boards are supported, but they play music only during the titles. If you skip through the starting screens as fast as I do—to get on with the game!—the value of the sound boards is exactly nil. The PC speaker handles sound effects during play, and the external speaker is superior to the sound boards for footsteps and the clang of Sword on Halberd. Tandy owners will find the three-voice sound chip supported, with a result superior to the PC clone external speaker.

Besides a 12-page rule book, you get a 60-page Adventurers Journal that has fewer pages of paragraphs than preceding games. There are only 17 pages of paragraphs, while *Bonds* had 30 pages of paragraphs, *Krynn* 22 pages and *Pool* 18. Except for the combat system, I find the story the best part of the game, so I would like to see more paragraphs, not fewer, in future games. The best part of a game is reading and living the story, which makes it just like being there. *Silver Blades* has more of the feel of "being there" than any *A D & D* game since *Pool of Radiance*.

As with paragraphs, there are fewer 5.25-inch disks than in the previous gold box games (two 5.25-inchers, half as many as *Krynn*), I wondered if the authors found a way to compress the program, or if the quality has been reduced.

I finished this quest in about 20-30 hours. The game shuts down after entering the last room of the Dreadlord, so do not enter the last room until you have finished exploring.

Conclusions: If you enjoyed the *Pool*, *Bonds* or *Krynn*, you will like this one. [If you haven't played any of them, though, try *Bonds* first.] It conforms strictly to the *A D & D* rules and was developed with the cooperation and approval of TSR. The story is detailed and interesting and carries you right along. If you like the best *A D & D* combat simulator available, one that comes with a great story, this is it.

Secret of the C-64 Silver

Skill Level: Intermediate.
Protection: Keyword from manual
Price: IBM, $49.95; C-64, $39.95
Company: SSI/EA
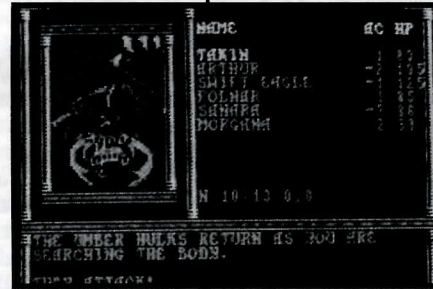
Bad Blood

"Killed again" would have been a fitting subtitle for this one, I muttered as I blundered into yet another nest of Kejeks and was quickly shot full of arrows. But it only took a second to reload one of my three saved games, and two days later I had recovered enough of my diminished arcade skills to rescue the Shaman and track down the Oracle.

Those were my first goals as I set out to prevent the final blitzkrieg in a race war the pure-blooded humans waged against the mutants in this unnamed land. (By the look of the cacti, however, it must be southern Arizona, the only place on the planet where saguaro grow.) After a cinematic introduction that was interactive enough to incorporate character selection (male or female human, or male mutant) I had begun my jaunt in the mutant village of Mardok.

Each of the half-dozen towns, villages and cities that had survived the nuclear holocaust, I learned, was dominated by "Humes" or "Mutes," as the lingo of the era calls them. Along with the terrain, are portrayed from a top-down view that is the finest yet seen in an adventure: large, infinitely detailed graphics and animated characters that are drawn in realistic perspective for a true 3-D experience.

The sound effects (produced by the PC speaker, even with a sound board installed) and music are also outstanding. And the music plays during the game, not just in the intro as in many programs.

The picture doesn't cover the entire screen. Instead, it's displayed on an old TV set (left over from the days before the war), and your health is indicated by the amount of water left in an old soda bottle beside the TV.

There are no other stats or attributes to fret over. Five buttons on the TV activate menus for listing, using or examining things in your inventory, talking to people, and accessing options for pausing, saving, reloading and activating a joystick. You also have individual controls for turning the music and sound effects on and off. This arrangement results in a nearly invisible interface that further reduces the barrier between the gamer and the fantasy.

When is a sequel not a sequel?

When it's a "technological sequel." Technologically this is a sequel to *Times of Lore*, which means the program uses an enhanced version of the engine that drove that game. You can talk to people by choosing assorted phrases from drop-down menus.

You might choose to "Talk About," which leads to a menu of things to discuss: the war, the Oracle or ammo. As in *Ultima*, limited conversations are possible, for new words are added to this menu as you talk to a character. In this manner a string of mini-quests are assigned to you by town leaders and the Oracle.

Other actions, such as examining and using things, are handled in a similar fashion. Combat was dramatically enhanced and now offers ranged weapons. Instead of bumping into a monster to attack it, as in *Lore*, you can fling grenades, fire an Uzi, swing a Vibrablade, or fall back on the good old reliable knife or whip.

Monsters and NPCs are finely animated and fun to kill. The Urse, a huge bear, is one of the toughest animals you'll ever encounter in any fantasy, so get hold of the Bazooka before going near his cave.

The mini-missions involve rambling through the desert and mountains, paddling across the green rivers and lakes, and fighting every step of the way as you seek out certain people, places and things. It won't take much logic to accomplish these goals, just a fair amount of talking and note-taking. The Satscan provides coordinates of your location, which makes it easier to return to places. Only the final maze, which takes place underground and involves pressing the correct sequence of 22 buttons, is tricky.

For adventurers whose arcade skills are too weak to last long in "Warrior" mode, designer Chris Roberts added a "Wimp mode" that reduces the number of encounters. The pause feature was well-implemented: pause is the first item on the menu, you just punch "O" (for the Options menu) and hit return.

You can even name your three saved games. Most action adventures won't permit more than one, let alone let you name them.

TV or not TV?

Bad Bug?

It's not really a bug, but be forewarned that you need 410 K of "free RAM" to play in CGA or Hercules mode, 530K for all others. ORIGIN advises booting your hard disk with a floppy to ensure any RAM-resident utilities don't interfere with the program.

And they will do so most enigmatically. Memory-intensive games usually just give an "out of memory" message when loading, then they crash. Not so with *Bad Blood*. It loaded briskly, so I assumed the computer had enough memory. The game seemed to work fine, but when I finally got to their locations, the Fisherman and the Shaman weren't where ORIGIN's customer support people assured me they should be.

And during one session I met nary a character or critter while roaming the entire landscape.

Rebooting with streamlined auto.exec and config.sys files solved this dilemma, and soon I was running into *too* many monsters.

You can also copy the program to floppies and play from them. Copy protection consists of "Thale's Comprehensive Guide to the Beast and Savages of the Plains," a color brochure that you can fold out to quickly find the answers to a pair of questions about the monsters. Sometimes you're asked to name the color of one's back, for instance, so software pirates will have to do more than just xerox the brochure.

C-64 version on the way

Disk access is nearly imperceptible when playing the MSDOS version from a hard drive, which is recommended by ORIGIN. Before endorsing the C-64 conversion, we'll have to see if disk access is bearable (or should that be Urse-able?), since that version of *Knights of Legend* turned out to be a nightmare.

Conclusions: While it's a lightweight quest, *Bad Blood* is one of the best looking action adventures ever to roll down Adventure Road. And the story makes it more than merely another arcade game with only the trappings of an adventure. I *didn't* have to spend a week playing it to write this review. It's such a mesmerizing experience, though, that I only quit when my right hand started getting cramped from punching those cursor keys all day.

Type: Action Adventure
Systems: MSDOS (640K required, joystick optional, hard disk recommended; Hercules, CGA, EGA, VGA/MCGA (256 colors), Tandy 16-color; Roland, Ad Lib, CMS, Innovation, Covox, Tandy sound boards)
Planned conversions: C-64 around Christmas, Amiga, spring 1991

By Shay Addams

Difficulty: Novice
Protection: Keyword
Price: $49.95
Company: ORIGIN, Inc.

Questmaster I: The Prism of Heheutotol

Dondra: A New Beginning was published back in the spring of 1988. Even the original release achieved sporadic circulation at best, and the conversions announced back then were just released last month along with a new Apple version. First published by Spectrum Holobyte, it was later handled by Micro-Illusions, and author Sean Barger now has it at Miles Computing.

Despite its "new beginning" in 1990, the new versions dropped Dondra from the title entirely (part of Barger's agreement with MicroIllusions) and are called *Questmaster: The Prism of Heheutotol.* (Thoughtfully, the Apple version's package points out it was formerly released under another name.)

It's a graphic adventure whose distinguishing feature is the inclusion of real-time puzzles. The story takes place in the land of Dondra, which is currently beset by the despicable Colnar. Your goal in this game is to recover the Crystal Pyrami. Colnar's defeat is reserved for a future sequel.

Type: Graphic Adventure
Systems: Apple 2 (48K), IIGS (512K), C-64, MSDOS (512K; 5.25" disks only; CGA, EGA, VGA, Tandy 16-color; Ad Lib)
Planned conversions: Amiga (no set date)

Cartoon time!

It presents us with speedy spot animation and very good graphics drawn by Rick Incrocci, whose name Apple gamers may recognize for his inimitable cartoon style in *Sherwood Forest.* The parser can deal with fairly complex commands and has a sizable vocabulary, but doesn't know what to do with pronouns.

Questmaster differs from standard graphic adventures in several ways. As in role-playing games, you'll be able to use your character from this game in sequels. A unique scoring system gives you one experience point for each puzzle point awarded when you solve a problem, and your total score at the end of the game determines the amount of experience available to use in the next game.
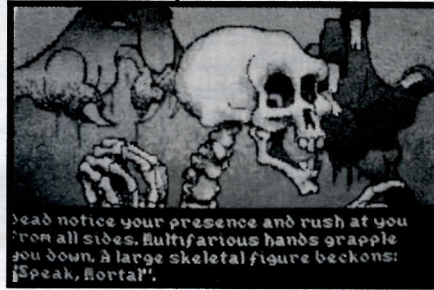
Your final score is modified by the number of times you saved during the game, how many times you got killed, the number of objects you collected (some of which have no value in this game but may prove handy in sequels), and how much time it took to complete the quest. If you get killed and have to start over, these numbers are saved to disk, but you can reset them to zero if you want to start over from scratch. As a result, two people can solve the game and wind up with vastly different scores.

New features and changes

The most sweeping change allows you to save several games in progress by giving your character different names. Minimal changes in the quest were made for the MSDOS and GS versions, in which some of the original game's conventional puzzles were turned into real-time puzzles. The map didn't change, so the solution published in *Quest for Clues II* will work, except for the new real-time puzzles (which usually means just waiting a few seconds in some places).

Music and sound effects were enhanced in the MSDOS version, but only if you have an Ad Lib board. This and the GS version can be install on a hard disk.

>ead notice your presence and rush at you 'rom all sides. Multifarious hands grapple you down. A large skeletal figure beckons: ;Speak, Mortal".

MSDOS VGA version

With some of the best graphics of the batch, the GS version also enjoys sound effects and music. The C-64 version has music and sounds.

Conclusions: Graphic adventures are becoming almost as rare as their all-text cousins, so it's encouraging to see something as good as *Questmaster* hit the shelves (even though the conversions set a record for missing the release date). Hopefully we won't have to wait forever to play *Questmaster II*, which Barger says is planned for Christmas of '91.

Difficulty: Intermediate
Protection: Keyword from manual
Price: MSDOS & IIGS, $39,45; Apple & C-64, $34.95
Company: Equilibrium/EA

Character Editors: friend or foe?

For newcomers to role-playing, a character editor is a utility program that enables you to work *real* magic on your party. You can give your Mage extra spell points, dole out more hit points to your Fighter, boost everyone's attributes to the maximum, and usually even resurrect dead party members.

It can be a two-edged sword, however. Wielded wisely, a character editor can enhance a quest, but used imprudently or excessively it can ruin the adventure.

Years ago, for example, I had to review *Wizardry III* on a tight deadline, so I tried a character editor for the first time. In addition to giving my characters enough hit points to get me through the first few mazes, I decided to deck them out in the finest armor and weaponry, which was available in another menu. The "Orb of Llylgamyn" sounded powerful enough, so I gave it to a Mage and entered the maze. The party hadn't taken a step before a non-player character uttered the equivalent of "Thanks for returning the Orb," and that was the end of the game!

Then again, there have been times when restrained use of an editor spared me hours of replaying the same dungeon or trying to rebuild a favorite character. While playing *Bard's Tale III* "just for fun," I cringed when Moe the Mage was repeatedly drained several levels during an encounter. Rather than spend hours building him back up, I restored him to his original level with a character editor and returned to the quest in minutes.

Even the best Orc-slayer among us has lost the occasional key battle by just a few hit points. After getting stomped repeatedly in *Pool of Radiance*, you might add just enough hit points to allow your characters to win the battle and get on with the quest. Sure, you can achieve the same effect by dashing off through the dungeon, slaying a couple of dozen Kobolds and advancing the party a level But maybe you happen to have a life outside these fantasy worlds and would like to spend at least a few hours a day interacting with *real* people (not to mention *real* monsters.)

Is is cheating?

Purists often express shock at the notion of using a character editor, refusing to "cheat" in order to win. And some game designers, continually whining about people "cheating," do their best to thwart such devices. But you paid for the thing, and have every right—moral, ethical and civil—to cheat if you want to. After all, if you totally abuse the program by making supercharacters who can race through the game in a few hours, the only person you're cheating is yourself: out of weeks of fun and fantasy.

Earthrise: The Solus Incident

The year is 2034, and you, the top investigator and general trouble-shooter of the Terran Mining Guild, are suddenly awakened by the clamorous sound of a telephone. It seems "Operation Astro Pilfer," a huge success till now, has hit a serious snag.

Astro Pilfer, you remember, is the backbone of the Guild, a codename for nothing less than the selection and transfer of appropriate asteroids from the belt into Earth orbit to facilitate mining.

The most recent contingent of scientists dispatched to the Solus asteroid discovered signs of life there, but radio transmissions enigmatically halted before they were able to elaborate.

Oh Solus mio

As the game begins, you find yourself in the cramped quarters of a cryogenics cabinet in a one-man craft orbiting Solus. You must take your lander down to the asteroid's surface and carefully scout the area.

Once on the surface, you've got to find a way to gain entry into the outpost, where you'll have to deal with the indigenous life-forms that block your progress. Most of all, you need to find out what happened to the engines so you can get the asteroid back on course toward Earth.

Earthrise is a new direction for Interstel. So far they've been best known for role-playing games that are heavy on strategy and tactics but light on effects. Usually they've been restricted to CGA graphics, which are hardly state of the art.

Solus Incident deemphasizes strategy and tactics and relies much more on graphics. The problem is that even though the graphics are far better than those in *First Expedition* or *Scavenger*, for example, they still aren't up to contemporary standards. In fact, they are about on a par with *Space Quest I*. Scenes are illustrated in basically medium- to low-resolution 16-color EGA, with added support for 16-color Tandy.

In fact, the entire game seems to be modeled after the 3-D adventures pioneered by Sierra. Control of the central character is the same, backgrounds blink in and out, one screen at a time, and many of the function keys do the same
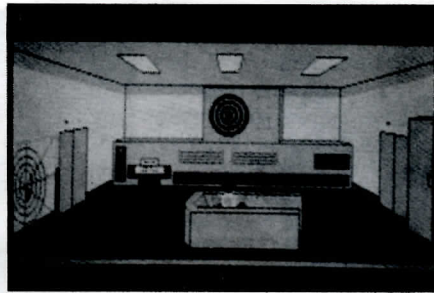
I feel a bad Earth a'risin'

thing as in the Sierra adventures.

Godzilla's little cousins

The premise is interesting and the story entertaining. But most of the puzzles are fairly arbitrary. They usually involve finding ways to deal with one of the various monsters that inhabit the asteroid.

Each of these characters has a different weakness. A file in the central computer contains the clues you need to destroy the bad guys. It's up to you to find the tools to do this, fix the engines and get back home.

The whole game looked a little on the weak side to me. There is substance here and there, but not that much. The parser is fairly inadequate, with too few synonyms. One part that sticks out in my mind is where you have to destroy a dome of glass that provides light for the hydroponics.

I tried any number of combinations to "break the dome with the hammer" but had no success. Finally "break glass" worked. A similar situation arose later when I had to shoot a laser through a hole in the door. Only a precise word combination was acceptable to the game. Anything slightly different got me killed.

Conclusions: *Earthrise* was a pleasant enough diversion for an afternoon or two. The graphics are medium to good, and sound is limited to the internal PC speaker. Gameplay itself is acceptable but not particularly memorable. If I found this game in the bargain bin at my local software store, I wouldn't feel cheated at having plunked down my hard-earned money for it.

Type: Animated Graphic Adventure
Systems: MSDOS (512K; CGA, EGA, Tandy 16-color; no sound board support)
Planned conversions: Maybe Amiga

Skill level: Beginner
Copy Protection: Keyword
Price: $49.95
Company: Interstel/EA

By Stephen King

Character editors

People who want and need them are going to use them anyway. My advice is to resist the urge to go beyond adding only the minimum amount points and equipment absolutely necessary to survive, or to bring a dead character to life.

Where are they when I need one?

Character editors are usually programmed by individuals and sold through the mail. (Though Richard Garriott, apparently fed up with seeing *Ultima* character editors appear so soon after each installment's release, included one in *Ultima VI*. To access it, just say Spam three times to Iolo, then say Humbug.)

Some of the best third-party character editors in the business come from Gosselin Computer Consultants, which I ran across in a computer magazine (yes, occasionally I actually read one). Gosselin turns out character editors for Apple, Amiga, MSDOS and C-64 computers.

Might & Magic made easy

All are menu-driven, the Amiga versions use the mouse and icons, all are backed by phone support if you run across a bug in a new release, and none are copy-protected. With them you can change your characters' attributes, race, sex, age, hit points, spell points and levels, and known spells. Many of these editors also let you view lists of the game's objects and give them to your party. Some even let you change the party's location in the game.

Gosselin has editors for: *Might & Magic I* and *II*, *Bard's Tale I*, *II & III*, *Ultima I* through *VI*, *Deathlord*, *Wizardry* (*I-III* on the same disk, different disks for *IV* and *V*), *Wasteland*, *Phantasie I-III*, *Autoduel*, *Magic Candle*, *Dragon Wars*, *Pool of Radiance*, *Hillsfar*, *Curse of the Azure Bonds*, *Champions of Krynn* (you can even get a Monster Editor for the *A D & D* games), *Space Rogue*, *Knights of Legend* and *Mines of Titan*. They range from $12.95 to $19.95, and they accept VISA and MasterCard. You can reach Gosselin Computer Consultants at POB 1083, Brighton MI 48116, or (313) 229-2453 from six to eight PM EST.

Walkthrough: *Future Wars: Adventures in Time*

Outside Building

When opening sequence is over, take bucket. Walk to control panel on the left and examine scaffolding. Operate the red button. Walk to the open window and operate it.

Inside Office Building

Examine trash can. Take paper bag. Walk into toilet. Operate cupboard. Take insecticide. Operate door to W. C. and take lit-


```
B   Office    Map     Secret   Teleport
    Toilet    Room    Hall     Room
                       C             D
    Outside
    Bldg   A       The
                   Present          To Ruins i

    G
    Big     Pub     Middle
    Tree            Ages                    Prison  J
                                            Room
    Castle  Village  Lake  Swamp
                   F         E              Wine
                                            Cellar

            Bridge              Altar  Monks  Father
                            H   Room      I   Superior
```

By the Lake

tle red flag (on floor). Use **cvdlfu** on **tjol**, then exit toilet and walk to the door on the right. After you get the message "something is under your feet," operate carpet. Operate right door. After the boss leaves, use **cvdlfu** on left door. Operate right door.

Map Room

Use key on cupboard below the bookshelves. Examine typewriter and note combination (40315). Operate drawer of desk. Take paper. Examine map. Use **gmbh** on little hole (on the map). Save game. Go east.
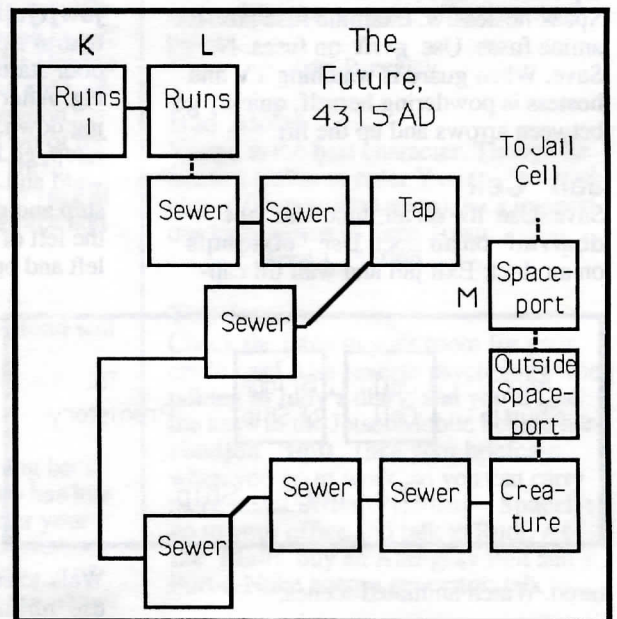
Secret Passage

Speed with the mouse is vital here. Examine keypad. Operate numbers (one at a time) found on the typewriter to reveal another door. Enter door (center-screen).

By Andrew Phang

Teleport Room

Examine machine. Examine opening. Walk to machine and use **qbqfs** on opening. Operate green button. Operate red button. Take documents. Enter teleport tube.

Swamp
(in the Middle Ages)

Walk left toward mosquitoes (walking only on the green areas in the swamp). Use insecticide on mosquitoes. Keep walking left till you notice a glint of light on the ground). Examine it to find a pendant. Go west.

Walk to the tree on the left of the screen and examine foot of tree to get rope. Use **rope** on tree branch. Wait till someone walk up and throws away some clothes, then walk to the clothes. Take tunic. Take slacks. After you change, go west.

Village, Pub and Castle

Walk to guard on drawbridge. Use **qfoebou** on guard. Go northwest to the back of the castle and walk to the tree. Operate tree. Examine ground where coin fell. Go to the Pub and operate door. Use **tjmwfs dpjo** on innkeeper. Listen to all gossip. Exit. Walk to guard and use **qfoebou** on guard. Enter castle. Listen to the Lord. Exit.
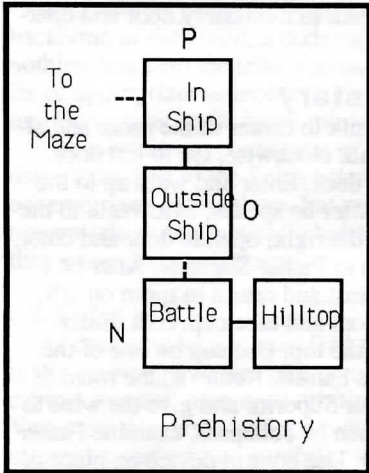
Village

Examine **hvbse**. **Ublf** lance. NW. Go to tree (stand at tip of second root from the right). Use **mbodf** on monk's habit. E. E. Save gave. Use **qmbtujd cbh** on lake. Quickly go west, then south. Walk up to bridge and use **gvmm cbh** on wolf. Walk to monastery door and operate door.

Monastery

Never walk to center of the room and always walk clockwise. Go to left door. Operate door. Enter and walk up to the monk. After he speaks, exit. Walk to the door on the right, operate door and enter. Walk up to Father Superior. After he speaks, exit and return to room on left. Enter room and take cup. Exit. Enter room at the top. Use cup on one of the full wine barrels. Return to the room of the Father Superior and give the wine to him. When he collapses, examine Father Superior. Use control device on piece of furniture at bottom of bookshelves to get magnetic card. Return to Wine Cellar.

Wine Cellar

Climb ladder and use control device on barrel at top of ladder.

Prison Room

Examine Lana. Walk to her and stand in front of the case. Examine **hbt dbqtvmf** (directly below Lana). Walk to computer console and use **nbhofujd dbse** on console. Watch animated scenes.

The Future (4315 AD)

Walk to bottom right of screen and exam-


```
K        L        The
Ruins    Ruins    Future,
i                 4315 AD
                                  To Jail
                                  Cell
Sewer    Sewer    Tap
                              M   Space-
         Sewer                    port

                                  Outside
                                  Space-
                                  port
         Sewer    Sewer    Crea-
                           ture
    Sewer
```

ine rubble to get blowtorch. E. Walk to white piece of rubble and examine box to find fuses. Examine rubble in middle of screen to find manhole. Operate manhole cover.

Sewers

You can walk in just one direc-tion. Do so till you reach the room with the tap (see map). Use **cmpx upsdi** on tap. Keep walking till you reach room with crea-ture. Go near the crea-ture and use **cmpxupsdi** on creature. Go up.

Prehistory

Outside Spaceport

Walk to door and examine videocamera. Use **mbodf** on videocamera. Enter spaceport. Save.

Spaceport

Walk to newspaper machine on left and examine coin collector. Use coin on money slot. Examine coin collector. Use coin on money slot to get newspaper. Wait for train.

Space Terminal

Speak hostess. S. Examine fuse box. Examine fuses. Use **gvtft** on fuses. N. Save. When guard is watching TV and hostess is powdering herself, quickly go between arrows and up the lift.

Jail Cell

Save. Use **lfz** on air duct. Use **hbt dbqtvmf** on air duct. Use **ofxtqbqfs** on air duct. Exit jail and wait till cap-

The Crughon Ship
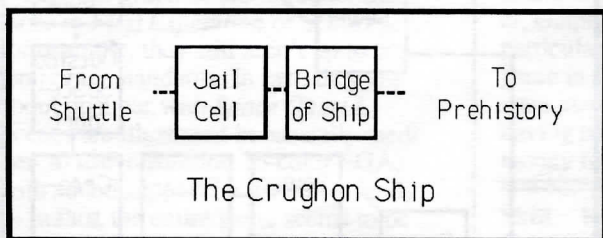
tured. Watch animated scenes.

Prehistory

Walk to Lo' Ann. Save game. West.

Shooting Sequence

Aim at aliens coming from left of screen, paying special attention to those marked "danger." After awhile, the leader will appear on a fly-ing platform. Kill him, and soon the attack will end. Ex-amine Lo' Ann three times to get pendant and invisibility pill. Use **qfoebou** on Lo' Ann. Walk to spaceship.

Outside Alien Ship

Examine dead alien to get magnetic card. Enter ship through doorway.

Inside Alien Ship

Use **nbhofujd dbse** on card reader. Operate case. Take gar-ment. Walk to videocamera and use garment on videocamera. Enter the sus-pended anima-tion capsule (click on center of case) and op-erate case. The ship will take off for the space station. Save.

On Space Station

Move to the right side of the door, then use **jowjtjcjmjuz qjmm** as the door starts open-ing. After slid-ing down the ramp, go for-ward and left immediately. Quickly leave ship and go to the front of the boxes on the left of the screen. Examine box on the left and operate it.

Store Room

Listen to Albert. Save. Walk to door.
You have six minutes to find the computer room and exit the space station, so be quick. (See map.)

Computer Room

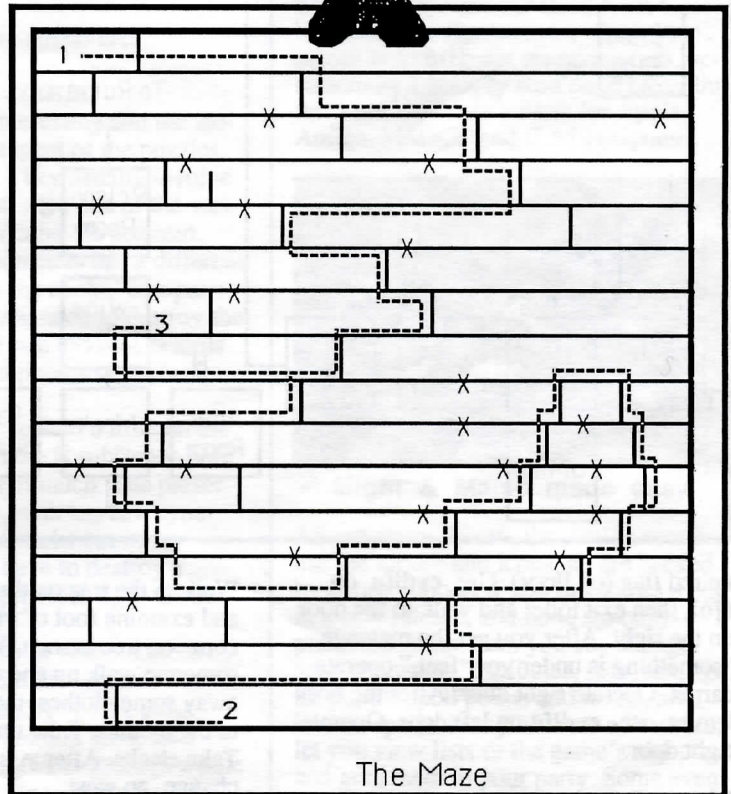Walk to computer console on the left and use **nbhofujd dbse** on console. Exit.

The Maze

Follow map to the exit.
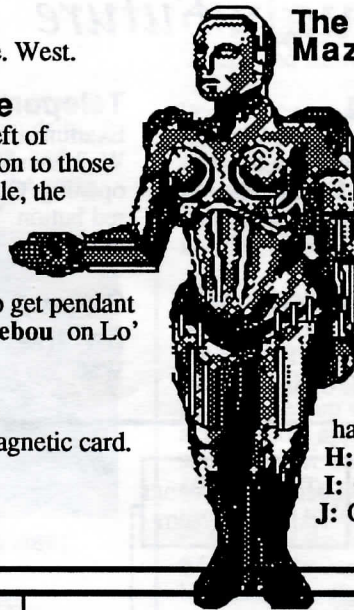
Map Key

A: Bucket
B: Plastic bag, insecti-cide, little flag, key
C: Sheaf of paper
D: Documents
E: Pendant
F: Rope, clothes
G: Silver coin, monk's habit
H: Cup
I: Control Device
J: Gas capsule

The Maze

K: Blowtorch
L: Fuses
M: Coin, newspaper
N: Pendant, invisibility pill
O: Magnetic card
P: Garment

The Maze

1: Start
2: Computer Room
3: Exit
X: Hole in floor
Vertical lines: Ladders
Dotted line: Path through maze

Keys to the Kingdoms

Secret of the Silver Blades

Magical silver shields can be quite helpful in this game. Vala, an NPC who will join your group in the Mines, has a +3 silver shield and Oswulf's spirit, who is found at the entrance to the castle, has a +5 silver shield, which can be duplicated using a simple technique in the training menu. Silver reflects the gaze of basilisks and medusae which are in abundance in the game and makes their threat of stoning an advantage for your men. They gaze, you reflect, they get stoned, end of story.

Al Giovetti

All new magic items should be given to extra characters to be duplicated (see above, or use technique described in the September 1989 issue of *QB*), or used to supply NPCs met along the way. **New Verdigris:** the Old Man at 2, 9 will give you the Cloak of Displacement and some Journal Entries and items as you complete quests. Visit him each time you return to town. A soldier at 14, 11 sells magic items, and you can trade platinum for gems at the vault at 7, 9. Then head for the Well (66, 36) via the teleporter at 3, 0. **In the Well:** go to 4, 1 and duck, then finish the battle to get Plate Mail+2, Shield+2 and Mail+2, Necklace, Magic Missiles, Long Sword+2 and Wand of Ice Storm. Defeat small dragons at 6, 6, using Ice Wands, do the same at 7, 7 and 8, 8 against Ancient Dragon. Drop Gems in Well for clues and next quest.
Marcus: return to town and defeat him at 15, 10. Then head to Ruins and follow map from JE #1. Before battle, cast Prayer, Bless and Haste if necessary; use Ice Wands on Dragon. You'll get a Cloak of Displacement. In the north ruins at 11, 0 is a battle with Dragons and Giants that nets you a Flail+2, Ring of Protection+2 and a Wand of Fireball. There's also a teleporter to the Well. Head to Black Circle HQ (23, 45) next. Key battles are at 12, 6 (Commander); 10, 6 (teleporter to Well); 14, 6 (Armoury); 14, 12 (Dragon Hatchlings, use Ice Wands); and 14, 14 (final battle).

Richard Rassmussen

Aboveground: Sleeping in town is dangerous till you slay Red Assassins at 15, 12. (But first fight Black Circle at 13, 11.) There's a Dragonhoard near 5, 48, with good treasure and Amulet of Eldamar. Ancient Bier at 59, 22 has good items.
The Mine: entrance is near 45, 37. Top level is Temple of Tyre, with secret doors at 7, 11(don't forget to get a Staff of Slurpee here); 12, 13; 15, 14; 1, 3. Level

One: see Derf the Dwarf for Staff quest, then go west and south to find Staff. Level Two: go west and north to find Staff. Level Three: go east and north to find Staff. Level Four: go south to find Staff. Level Five: go north and west to find Staff. Level Six: go west to find Staff and Vala, who'll join party. Level Seven: go south and west to find Staff, west to find Portal to Level Nine. Level Ten: go east to Cavern and entrance to Dungeon.
Dungeon Riddles: the first is **zpvs ifbsu**, second is **zpvs xpse**, third is **zpvs csfbui**, fourth is **river**, fifth is **xbufs**, sixth is **xjoe**.
The Keys: all in the Dungeon. Brass is at 12, 15 on Level Seven. Gold is on Level One at 2, 11. Silver is at 0, 8 on **Level Four.**
Ice Crevasse: The entrance to Giant Village and Portal is at 48, 86. Help Frost Giant King at 50, 94 for +4 weapons. Help Oswulf fight at 7, 82 for +5 silver weapons.
The Castle: exit to second level is at 9, 15. Ignore Medusa Sargatha. Secret door to Level Three is at 0, 14. After tough fight at 7, 1, you get +5 weapons. Dreadlord's at 2, 5, with many Storm Giants. Use Magic Wands, etc.

Dennis Ewell

The Mines: On Level Eight, go north, then west from the lift to use the malfunctioning teleporter to Level Nine. On Level Ten, go north from the lift and dig for Gems and experience.
Ice Giant Village: speak nicely to King. **Iron Golems:** Fireball and Magic Missile spells *heal* these fiends; slow them down with Lightning Bolt. **The Castle:** to enter, you need the Amulet of Eldamar and the eight pieces of Oswulf's Staff (see above). Take them to the Dwarf in the temple on Level One of the Mine to be assembled. You also need the gold, silver and brass keys from the Dungeon. Password of the day on Level Two of the Castle is **Tuffmfzf.** On Level Three, use silver key on door one, speak **Ptxvmg** at door two, use gold key on door three and brass key on door four.

Vivienne Stevenson

Healing: Priests at Temple of Gond will heal for free.
Scott Haverly

Circuit's Edge

Most quests involve much running back and forth. Check with Chiri, who has lots of info. For money, see Papa after your first meeting with him. Useful items are at Laila's, Electroniques, Friendly's and some street dealers. Check any *full* names

you run across on the police computer.
Police Computer: you need police badge for first access (from street dealer). Next time you need datalink terminal, two uplink cables, belt phone, commcode number 054AJR86 and password **hsbwuz. Ransom note:** check "floral scent" at Heavenly Fragrances. **Docks:** use Alpine Jack and Super Spy chips. **Muhammed:** ask about "odd woman." **Mimi:** ask about cologne ("close to death" means cemetery). Sell crystal ball back to her. **Warehouse:** blow door off with plastics (from cigars at dock), detonator (Abdul), countdown timer, Demolitionist Chip (Morgue, Luigi's remains), wire.

Bob Schreur

King's Bounty

Explore each world by sea thoroughly when you first reach it, to find the gold and troops needed to explore by land. Always garrison the castles, for after about 20 castles, the extra gold really pays off. The key to easily defeating the fourth world is Vampires. Try to get about 200 of them if possible. They do lots of damage and can heal slain Vampires in combat with each attack. Try to garrison the easiest castle there quickly, so you won't spend many days in the desert. After this, send Demons and Vampires (which can fly) across the continent and desert for all gold and treasure. The last (and seemingly impossible) battle can easily be won with the following armies: 100+ Demons, 30+ Dragons, 200+ Vampires, 100+ Giants, 200+ Trolls and anything else, such as Ghosts or Archmages. Don't worry about morale, for even with its medium to low morale, this army should have no trouble, thanks to its effective manpower.

Robert Breezley

Bad Blood

Varigg is the best character. Though he needs a Collar to enter Yvrium (go northeast of town around noon), he's impervious to radiation in Zero Town.
Fred J. Philipp

The Jetsons

Check the table in your room for your credit card. Use reverse psychology when talking to Judy's diary, and you'll find the keys to the JetsonMobile behind her **ebodjoh tipft.** Take your briefcase when you go to work, so you can carry more items. **After visiting Spacely:** go to your office and talk to Rudi. **At the Mall:** buy an Anti-grav Belt and a Port-a-Nuke energy generator; talk to

Jane. Don't forget to visit Elroy and his Science Fair at the Little Dipper school, where he'll give you something useful.
Andrew Phang

Ultima VI

Multiple saved games: For each game you want to save, create a directory under your *Ultima VI* directory. Then create the following batch file:
ULTSAVE.BAT
ECHO Saving Game files to <drive letter:\ULTIMA6\%1
COPY <drive letter>:\ULTIMA6\SAVEGAME*.*<drive letter:\ULTIMA6\%1

ULTREST.BAT
ECHO Restoring%1
COPY <drive letter>:\ULTIMA6\%1*.* <drive letter>:\ULTIMA6\SAVEGAME*.*

(Replace the words "drive letter" with the letter of your drive where your ULTIMA6 directory is stored.)

When you're ready to save a game, follow these steps:
1. Use Control-S to do a normal save.
2. Use Control-Q to quit to DOS.
3. Type ULTSAVE <directory name> (the name of one of the directories you created for the multiple saves).
This copies all the SAVEGAME files into the directory you specified. To restore such a saved gam:
1. Type ULTREST <directory name>
2. Start *Ultima VI* by typing Ultima6
3. Choose Journey Onward, and the game restored is the one you saved in the appropriate directory (named in step one of this section). Steps 2 and 3 may be condensed by typing GAME while in the ULTIMA6 directory.
(Note: this trick arrived at the last minute and has not been verified, so copy your saved game to a floppy before trying it.)
David A. Lennon

More ALT key cheats: while holding down the ALT key, press 4, then 7, then 1 on the numeric keypad. This advances the time about an hour, which is useful when you arrive in a town at night. (Nathan Hanish reports that 2, 1, 5 has the same effect.) You can teleport to useful locations by holding the ALT key and hitting 2, 1, 4, then typing in these numbers:
3983a70: Shrine of Humility
09e3af0: Shrine of Valor
3a61070: Shrine of Honesty
0180161: Shrine of Spirituality
1fc1670: Shrine of Compassion
1463370: Shrine of Honor
1270280: Shrine of Justice
33e0a70: : Shrine of Sacrifice
39b3550: Codex Chamber
1331680: Lord British's Castle

6666665: Gargoyle's Castle (sure, the designers' choice of 666 for latitude and longitude was purely coincidental.)
******5: Gargoyle World
(The 0s in the list are zeros. **Sherry:** to keep the Mouse from getting killed in battle, set her combat tactic to "retreat." **To carry more weight:** take along an empty bag in your inventory. When you find an item but can't pick it up, click on the empty bag and you'll see the amount of weight you can carry will change. Now pick up the item.
Beatrix Feagins

Les Manley:
In Search for the King
Fountain: fill thermos with water. **Boss:** ask for **sbjtf**. Wait. When he's not looking, get keys. **Apartment:** Show ID (from closet at station, after using key from Boss). Sit on couch. Ask about: King, **tdbsg, dpodfsu, tpeb**. "Show **tdbsg**." Spill **tpeb**on **tdbsg**. **Scarf:** east. Climb fence. **Ticket:** Go to trailer. Knock. Talk. Ask for work. South. Get shovel. Drop shovel. North. Knock. Talk. Ask for ticket. **With circus ticket:** go to wagon. Look wagon. Enter. Ask about future, journey, Luigi, other circus members. **Ljtt Zarmooska.** Go to Strong Man. Look man. Move slightly till you find the right spot, then look Luigi. Ask about other circus members. Give **xby** to Luigi. Get rosin. North. Look, talk to Helmut. Ask about dream, etc. Give dream to Helmut. **Test-o-Strength:** Look man (find right spot first). Get popcorn. Enter Big Top. Drop jar. East. Give **sptjo** to Fred. Return to Fat Lady. Look. Talk. Return to Test-o-Strength. Stand on Test-o-Strength.
Fred J. Philipp

Iron Lord
Get rich quick: enter the archery contest and practice till you can hit the targets easily. If the wind moves your arrow off-course, set your shot power to around 40. Once you've got plenty of money, explore around and give some to each person you meet. Most will join, and some have useful weapons.
Andrew Phang

Questmaster I
Arena: north, read mural, south, west. **Wildebeest:** drink liquid, west, west. **Village:** enter house, get pot. **Bar:** give **gppe** to green man. **Manhole:** lift manhole with crowbar, look down, say yes. **Cavern:** cut vine with knife. Eat fruit. **Barn:** give **Hfn** to Lioness for info on fruit. **Corn field:** move back and forth to get eight dollars. **Valley bottom:** get hat from scarecrow, wear hat, go east into small hole. (For fun, enter barn while you're a mouse.)
Fred J. Philipp

Future Magic
Key of Thor: this is in the depths of Ceyjavik. To get there, wait for the Borkin Station distress signal, then search the Command Center. You'll find a communication from the sole survivor, who will direct you to the Sealife Labs. Explore there, descending to level four, where you'll find the Key. **Green Dragons:** to get past these and other tough monsters, use a "strong point" formation: keep your two strongest fighters up front, with both firearms *and* contact weapons such as the Energy Blade. You can find these, as well as Hyper Uzis and AK-4700s, in the building of the Borkan Research Complex. Save ammunition for the hordes of Green Dragons. If overwhelmed by too many, blast your way through and make a run for it. You cannot hope to defeat large numbers of them, even with heavy firepower. **Bright Room:** when you find the Key here, it will transport you back to the Sealife Lab, avoiding most of the monsters. It will also provide information on the Sentinels. **Caldone:** On the 793 level of each Tower is a club that allows entrance only for characters who've reached level 20 in a particular ability (Tower 1: Charisma, Tower 2: Strength, Tower 3: Dexterity). Inside these clubs you'll find things such as armories with special weapons.
LTC Anthony J. Giasi

Code-name: ICEMAN
After leaving the sub to get to the off-shore drilling rig, go eight screens left and three up. At the rig, type "set explosives." Go to harbor (one screen left, two up, then right till your heading is 35 degrees and 150 yards, then go up). If you won the magnetic device in the Boss game, type "use device" and go up. If not, get the bottle by the rock (upper right) and enter the cave on the upper left. To get through this maze, light a flare and follow the direction of the debris, repeating this till you're out
Jason Burkholder

Keys to the Keys

Each month *two* contributors to Keys get the game of their choice. The winners are randomly selected. Please send clues and tips to recent adventures—those not covered in previous issues, walkthroughs or *Quest for Clues*. [All clues become exclusive property of *QuestBusters*.] This month's winners Jason Burkholder and Andrew Phang.

To decode **clues**, count one letter back.

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Trade or sell your old adventures with a free ad. (Adventures only, no pirated software, limit of 10 games per ad. <u>Please state system.</u>

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Sell only: Pool of Rad, Azure Bonds, $25 for both. Ultima 3 & 4, $20 for both. Bard 1-2-3, all for $20. $20 @: M & M 1, Moebius, King's Quest 4. Christopher Carter, 21 St. James Pl. 16-B, Brooklyn NY 11205

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COMMODORE

Amiga: Want to buy Paladin, Dragons of Flame, Hillsfar, Ultima 1-4, Dungeon Master. P Matta, 73 Basswood Rd, Farmington CT 06032

Want: Silver Blades, Trinity, ZorkQuest 2, Enchanter. Brian James, 7111 S. Albion St, Littleton CO 80122

$15 @: Bard 1, Zac McKracken, Maniac Mansion, Legacy of Ancients. $10 @: Wishbringer, Borrowed Time, Tass Times, Mindshadow, Murder on Mississippi. Shawn Lauzon, 29606 41 St, Salem Wi 53168

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Want M & M 2, Magic Candle, Ultima 4, Bard 2, preferably w/cluebooks. R Wyatt, 8614 Bramble Lane #203, Randallstown MD 21133

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Sell, $20 @, 5.25" only: Circuit's Edge, M & M 2, Space Rogue, Starflight 2. Both formats: Dragon Wars, Larry 3, Space Quest 3, Manhunter NY. William Gustafson, 3490 NW 179th St, Portland OR 97229

Trade: King's Quest 1-4 (4 is 256K version), Space Quest 1-2, Journey. Want Space Quest 3, Larry 3, Hero's Quest, MT32-compatible games. Chris Linton, POB 35, Coventry VT 05825

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